

Literacy Tests

Proponents of tests to prove an applicant's ability to read and understand English claimed that the exams ensured an educated and informed electorate. In practice they were used to disqualify immigrants and the poor, who had less education. In the South they were used to prevent African Americans from registering to vote. The Voting Rights Act ended the use of literacy tests in the South in 1965 and the rest of the country in 1970.

SWORN WRITTEN APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION

(By reason of the provisions of Sections 241, 241-A and 244 of the Constitution of Mississippi and relevant statutes of the State of Mississippi, the applicant for registration, if not physically disabled is required to fill in this form in his own handwriting in the presence of the registrar and without assistance or suggestion of any person or memorandum.)

1. Write the date of this application. _____
2. What is your full name? _____
3. State your age and date of birth. _____
4. What is your occupation? _____
5. Where is your business carried on? (Give city, town or village, and street address, if any, but if none, post office address). If not engaged in business, so state. _____

6. By whom are you employed? (Give name and street address, if any, but if none, post office address). If not employed, so state. _____

7. Where is your place of residence in the county and district where you propose to register? (Give city, town or village, and street address, if any, but if none, post office address) _____

8. Are you a citizen of the United States and an inhabitant of Mississippi? _____
9. How long have you resided in Mississippi? _____
10. How long have you resided in the election district or precinct in which you propose to register? _____
11. State your last previous place of residence, (Give street address, if any, but if none, post office address). _____

12. Are you a minister of the gospel in charge of an organized church, or the wife of such a minister? If so, what church? (Give address in each instance) _____
13. Check which oath you desire to take: (1) General _____ (2) Minister's: _____ (3) Minister's wife: _____ (4) If under 21 years at present, but will be 21 years old by date of general election: _____
14. If there is more than one person of your same name in the precinct, by what name do you wish to be called? _____
15. Have you ever been convicted of any of the following crimes: bribery, theft, arson, obtaining money or goods under false pretenses, perjury, forgery, embezzlement, or bigamy? _____
16. Have you ever been convicted of any other crime (excepting misdemeanors for traffic violations)? _____

Mississippi voter registration form, 1955–1965

Gift of Charles Dullea

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In Mississippi, applicants were required to transcribe and interpret a section of the state constitution and write an essay on the responsibilities of citizenship. Registration officials selected the questions and interpreted the answers, effectively choosing which applicants to pass and which to fail.

Hours & Admission

Open every day, except December 25, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Admission is free and no tickets are required.

Location & Contact

1300 Constitution Ave NW,
Washington, DC 20560 <https://www.google.com/maps/place/smithsonian+national+museum+of+american+history/@38.8912835,-77.0322449,17z>

[Contact Information </about/contact>](#)

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